NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

Weekly Staff Newsletter
June 4, 1999

Flynn and colleagues report on Andes research in *Natural History*

In the June 1999 issue of *Natural History*, **John Flynn**, Andre Wyss (Geology Research Associate, UCSB) and Reynaldo Charrier (University of Chile, Santiago) report on their latest field work, discoveries, and research in the Andes Mountains of Chile. The team's latest fossil findings provide clues vital to deciphering the geological history of the vast Andes range and fill a key gap in the fossil record, a 20-million-year period during which South America, while separated from all other land-masses, was a great island continent. The fossils are extremely significant because of the unique conditions that formed the continent of South America, which had its dry-land connections to the other continents broken by plate tectonic movements starting about 180 million years ago and finalizing about 70 to 80 million years ago. This resulted in an ecosystem which evolved largely independent of of those from elsewhere on the earth, until the Central American isthmus joined North and South America some 3 million years ago.

The Andes range has been geologically shaped by the volcanic and seismic zone known as the Ring of Fire, caused by the Pacific Ocean plates being pulled beneath South America as it moved westward away from Africa. As the Andes rose, rock layers containing older, previously unknown assemblages of fossils were thrust on top of more recent rock layers, indicating a much more complicated (and younger) history of uplift for that area than had been believed previously. In the team's earlier expeditions they discovered more than 25 new species of mammals that lived about 35 million years ago, the Tinguiririca fauna, including the earliest known groups of notoungulates (endemic hoofed herbivores) with high-crowned, ever-growing teeth adapted for grazing. That fauna represents the earliest evidence of grasslands from anywhere on the planet. The team's expeditions in more recent years have spread out over the Andes, and resulted in the discovery of an even older group of notoungulates that lived between 40 and 50 million years ago but did not have teeth suitable for grazing (indicating presence of forests instead of grasslands), and also the historic discovery of the oldest complete skull of an anthropoid primate from the New World. This fossil, named *Chilecebus*, clearly shows an African ancestry for New World monkeys (platyrrhines) but also raises new questions about how and when primates first migrated to the New World from Africa (as there was no land bridge available). These remarkable discoveries assure that the Andes will continue to be researched by scientists seeking to further the knowledge of earth's evolutionary and geologic history.

Submitted by the Academic Affairs Department

FIELD NOTES

Week of June 7

Staff/Volunteer Events

Tae Bo Class
- Monday 5 p.m.
  Ground Floor, East Stairwell

Tuesday Noon Seminar Series
- Zoology Classroom

Aerobics Class
- Tuesday & Thursday 5 p.m.
  Ground Floor, East Stairwell

Running Club
- Wednesday 5 p.m.
  Meets at West Door

ATTENTION MOVIE BUFFS

Call or stop by the Human Resources office for discounted movie tickets for Loews/Cineplex Odeon/Sony Theatres for only $5.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Lions and tigers and Bruce

Bruce Patterson (Zoology/Mammals) recently returned from Germany, where he delivered the opening address in a symposium entitled "Isolated Vertebrate Communities in the Tropics" as a guest of the Zoologisches Forschungsinstitut and Museum Alexander Koenig in Bonn. His talk, "Analyzing species composition in fragments," represented collaborative research with **Wirt Atmar** (Research Associate, Zoology). After the conference, Bruce traveled to Berlin, where he measured more than 125 lions and 30 tigers (including now extinct Caspian and Javan forms) as part of the Tsavo Research Program.

CCUC news

CCUC sponsored a delegation of six people from the Kuna Yala to attend the opening ceremonies for *The Art of Being Kuna* exhibition in May. The delegation included a high chief, the Secretary of the Kuna Territory, two representatives of the Women's Mola Cooperative, and one of the leaders of the Bilingual Kuna-Spanish education movement. While in Chicago, they met with people from NACE college, and interpreted some of the molas on exhibition.

At the 76th Annual Meeting of the Central States Anthropological Society, held in Chicago in April, **Madeleine Tudor** presented a paper entitled " Conveying Ethnography through Video at The Field Museum: A Look into Chicago's Homes and the Meaning of Domestic Space." **Alaka Wali** also presented a paper entitled "The Americas Exhibits at The Field Museum." Both papers were part of "Public Anthropology at The Field Museum," a panel chaired by Tudor and organized by Field Museum Research Associate **Carolyn Johnson**, who in conjunction with exhibit developer **Michelle Miller**, presented "Sounds from the Vaults: Presenting Music, Anthropology and Museum Collections in a Public Millennium Exhibit." Madeleine and Alaka also delivered papers at The Society for Applied Anthropology 1999 Annual Meeting held in Tucson, Arizona, in April.

The papers, entitled respectively "The Field Museum as Contested Cultural Space," and "The GAP Comes to Harlem: The Struggle for Contested Cultural Space," were given as part of the panel "Landscapes and Their Values: Multiple Patterns of Usage and Meaning Attached to Common Ground." At the meeting Alaka was elected to a 2-year term on the nominations and elections committee of the Society. Alaka was also appointed to the Awards Committee of the American Anthropological Association to for a two year term.

Alaka was featured on a special news series on marriage in the 90's, on WMAQ, Channel 5, on Friday May 7, where she provided an anthropological perspective and cross-cultural comparisons on marriage in society.

Alaka recently was awarded the position as Principle Investigator for a major research project on the social impact of the informal arts in Chicago. The project, and Alaka's participation, is supported by the Columbia College Center for Arts Policy.

Bauer publishes ceramics research in *Fieldiana*

Brian Bauer, Adjunct Curator in the Department of Anthropology at The Field Museum and Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has published "The Early Ceramics of the Inca Heartland" in the recent Anthropology *Fieldiana*. This study presents a new pottery sequence for the Cusco region in the south central Andes of Peru. The Cusco region is world famous as being the heartland of the Inca empire, the largest empire to develop in the New World. The investigation is based on surface collections and test excavations in the region from 1984 through 1987. The archaeological survey covered more than 600 square kilometers and recorded the locations of more than 250 archaeological sites, dating from around

2000 B.C. up to the conquest of the Inca at A.D. 1532. Ceramic chronologies are critical tools for archaeologists in examining prehistoric and historic cultural developments. Relatively little archaeological research can be conducted without them. This work will greatly advance current research in the Inca heartland.

Tuesday at Noon Seminar Series continues

Dr. John Masey, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History and visiting Bass Scholar, will be our next speaker. The title of his talk is "Early Cretaceous fishes and the break-up of Gondwana." He will discuss fossils of both fresh water and marine fishes that give evidence for the early history of the continental break-up which created the Atlantic Ocean. Please join us at 12 noon in the Zoology classroom on June 8. This will be the last regularly scheduled Tuesday at Noon Seminar until we begin the series again on September 14.

Submitted by **Bill Burger**

Construction to begin on new kids' store

The Kid's Market Place store will close on Friday, June 4 at noon for renovation. Construction wall will be installed on Monday, June 7. Construction will take approximately three weeks. The new store, Kid's Field Trip, will open on Saturday, July 3. The renovated store will offer many items that will appeal to children and school groups. The new store graphics will reflect the kids' area in the new Main Store.

We appreciate your patience during the short renovation period, and hope to see you stop by once the new store is open!

Submitted by **Laura Sadler**

From the Shedd Aquarium...

Lt. Vetriveck of the Chicago Police Department has informed us that fireworks will be taking place every Saturday night through Labor Day at Navy Pier. If you are working any Saturday evening events, please make sure you take the fireworks bottleneck into consideration, along with the fact that the Chicago Police Department closes down eastbound Solidarity Drive at 11 p.m.

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Tatzyana Wachter	ECP	5 years
Douglas Stotz	ECP	5 years
Dan Summers	Zoology-Insects	25 years
Ventura Hinojosa	Housekeeping	10 years
Michael Shouba	FP&O	25 years
Mary Anne Rogers	Zoology-Fishes	15 years
Lysette Bell	Visitor Services	5 years

CONGRATULATIONS!

READY, SET, TAE BO

We recently surveyed staff to gauge interest in offering Tae Bo classes at work. As a result of your responses, we will offer Tae Bo classes for the month of June on Monday nights at 5 p.m. Classes will be held on the ground floor by the east stairwell. At the end of June, we will evaluate the attendance of both the Tae Bo and aerobic classes to determine if we will continue to offer the programs, begin asking for staff contributions and/or continue to offer free classes.

With summer right around the corner, this is a great time to get in shape four days a week right here at work:

Monday *	**Tae Bo Class**	**5 p.m.**	**Ground Floor, East Stairwell**
Tuesday*	**Aerobics Class**	**5 p.m.**	**Ground Floor, East Stairwell**
Wednesday	**Running Club**	**5 p.m.**	**Meet at West Door**
Thursday*	**Aerobics Class**	**5 p.m.**	**Ground Floor, East Stairwell**

**Classes will be held through the month of June to determine interest.*

After a work out, remember to take advantage of our new shower facilities right down the hall from the Cashier's Cage! If you have any questions, please call **Carole Kasarda** at ext. 7275.

Submitted by **Carole Kasarda**

Thanks for your help!

Many thanks to all who helped make the dedication of the Sidney R. and Addie Yates Exhibition Center such a special event. The invitation and programs were beautifully designed by **David Hodges** and **David Quednau**. The support of the Development Office staff—**Charles Katzenmeyer, Madelyn Thompson, Susan VandenBosch, Susan Webb, Cynthia Winship, Janet Young, Hill Rowan, Mark Schmeltzer**—and **Alexander Sherman** was invaluable. As always, **Carol Konieczny**'s help and support and that of the Public Services stars made the night. **Elree Smith** gets a special gold star for all her patience and hard work. Many thanks to all.

Submitted by **Fay Levin**

Natural News

The *Natural News* is edited by **Rodger Patience** in the Development office (ext. 7286, patience@fmnh.org) and **Erica Kelly** in the Education Department (ext. 7547, ekelly@fmnh.org). Submissions are welcome via e-mail or on disk in Microsoft Word or WordPerfect format. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday at noon. Remember – write early and often!